

Robert Owen Centre for Educational Change

# Music for Integration

## Research Briefing

Exploring the potential of music education for integrating newly arrived children in schools



INSPIRING PEOPLE WITH MUSIC

## Music for Integration Research Briefing

This Research Briefing focuses on using music education as a tool for social integration. Music as an integration tool for children in education settings has been proven useful and is needed because music is a non-discriminatory way of engaging people with little command of the local language. This briefing offers policy and education professionals at all levels tools to integrate newly arrived children, including a framework, practical examples and strategies to develop new activities.

### What can build up barriers?

- Additional physical or cognitive needs
- Low fluency in the local language
- Lack of knowledge between cultures

### Who are the new arrivals?

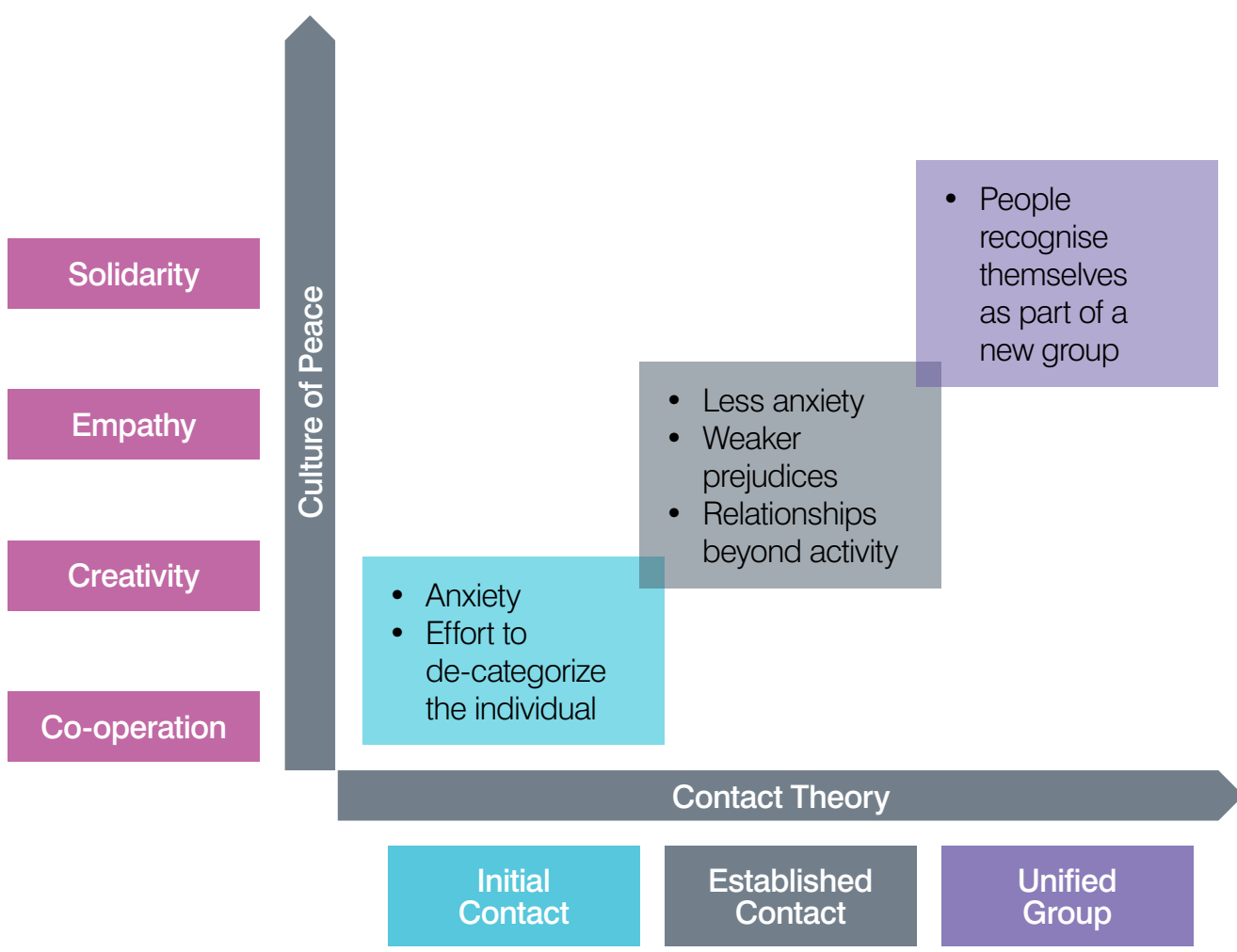
- **International migrants**  
Including refugees, asylum seekers and economic migrants from overseas
- **Internal migrants**  
Including pupils joining the school as a result of moving home within the UK, for example, Roma and Traveller pupils
- **Institutional movers**  
Pupils who change schools without moving home, including exclusions and voluntary transfers
- **Individual movers**  
Pupils who move without their family, for example looked after children and unaccompanied asylum seeking children (adapted from Department of Children Schools and Families, 2007).

### How is integration favoured?

Through a culture of peace in a process of **mutual recognition** and learning about each other: 'If you recognize another person with regard to a certain feature you do not only admit that she has this feature but you embrace a positive attitude towards her for having this feature. Such recognition implies that you bear obligations to treat her in a certain way, that is, you recognize a specific normative status of the other person, e.g. as a free and equal person.

But recognition does not only matter normatively. It is also of psychological importance. Most theories of recognition assume that in order to develop a practical identity, persons fundamentally depend on the feedback of other subjects and of society' (Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy, 2016).

## A framework for social integration in schools



### Culture Of Peace

The culture of peace refers to a new understanding of peace, not only as the absence of war or conflict, but also as the searching of a harmonious society. In this society all people would work towards building up respect to positively transform their conflicts (Gallun, 2008).

In education settings, a culture of peace may be taught with the aim to develop universal human values such as co-operation, creativity, empathy, solidarity, and capacity for dialogue. These can be consciously promoted at school across all curriculum areas, as well as through non-formal and informal learning. This entails that in the planning of formative experiences inclusive pedagogic methodologies are selected to promote team working, trust, communication and the acknowledgement of the other (Cabedo, 2015).

### Contact Theory

Odena (2010, 2014), revisiting Pettigrew's (1998) contact theory, states that a group with weak bonds can, through interaction, experience a process of understanding that transforms pre-existing concepts and any prejudices against each other.

This is a three-phase process, according to which the individual is (a) de-categorized during initial contact activities, (b) weakens any prejudices and anxieties and extends the relationship beyond the activity once the contact has been established, and (c) develops a new understanding of oneself as belonging to a unified group.

In this way, a new scenario is opened to explore the other's point of view and to find new ways to engage with others. This theory aims to overcome differences and bridge borders over time, either amongst divergent positions or diverse groups and communities.

Glasgow, the third largest UK city, had in 2013

- more than 13,400 children and young people with English as Additional Language (EAL);
- more than 120 languages spoken in schools (Docherty, 2013).

## Why music to promote social integration?

In an in-depth review of evidence of the power of music Hallam (2010) found that music education engagement assists in developing literacy, self-esteem, creativity, social and personal development, and health and well-being. The positive effects of singing and music have been linked to enhancing children's motivation and help develop emotional resilience and manage times of change (Maclean, 2011).

### Sense of belonging and personal power

Songs plus synchronized, coordinated movement meet our needs for belonging by comforting us, bringing us closer together and releasing dopamine, the so-called 'feel-good' hormone in the brain. (Chanda & Levitin, 2013). They also develop our sense of personal power by 'invigorating us, imbuing participants with a sense of shared purpose, releasing oxytocin, a neurochemical involved in establishing trust, and providing repetition that gives predictability' (Maclean, 2011, p. 11)

### Creativity

'The greater the number of units of music classes the greater the creativity' (Hallam, 2010, p. 278)

### Social and personal development

'The most frequent overall influences on pupils derived from engagement with the arts in school were related to personal and social development. In music there were perceived effects relating to awareness of others, social skills, well-being and transfer effects (...) Teachers working in schools reported considerable benefits of learning to play an instrument, including the development of social skills, gaining a love and enjoyment of music; developing team-work; developing a sense of achievement, confidence and self-discipline; and developing physical co-ordination. (Hallam, 2010, pages 278-279)

### Physical development, health and well-being

'Analysis identified six dimensions associated with the benefits of singing: well-being and relaxation, benefits for breathing and posture, social benefits, spiritual benefits, emotional benefits, and benefits for the heart and the immune system' (Hallam, 2010, p. 281)

Music acts as a powerful retrieval cue for memories associated with events of our life cycle such as birth, marriage and death, as well as with events of our environmental cycle such as the seasons, the rains, daybreak and nightfall: music infuses ritual practices with meaning, makes them memorable, and allows us to share them with our friends, family and living groups, facilitating a social order. (Maclean, 2011, p. 11)

### Literacy

'Engagement with music plays a major role in developing perceptual processing systems which facilitate the encoding and identification of speech sounds and patterns: the earlier the exposure to active music participation and the greater the length of participation, the greater the impact. Transfer of these skills is automatic and contributes not only to language development but also to literacy' (Hallam, 2010, p. 272)



## Some ideas

The activities music teachers undertook in the case studies discussed on Pages 5 and 6, all had music at their heart, and through this educators produced creative spaces which facilitated integration.

A fun way of developing a sense of belonging amongst children is co-operative games. The following are some examples of models of co-operative games, whose ideas may be adapted incorporating music:

### Co-operative Games & Activities (USA)

<http://www2.peacelife.org/digitalactivitycenter/resources/search>



### Co-operatives Games in the Primary School (Republic of Ireland)

[www.pdst.ie/sites/default/files/Co-operative%20games%20in%20the%20Primary%20School\\_0.pdf](http://www.pdst.ie/sites/default/files/Co-operative%20games%20in%20the%20Primary%20School_0.pdf)



## Developing new activities

In closing, we propose below a few building blocks for the design of inclusive pedagogies of creative co-operation, which could be used across a number of settings and age groups. These suggestions can be adapted for all types of music activities, for instance in group composition projects, singing/ performance, and appraisal of recorded and live music:

1. Plan suitable stimulating challenges in relation to the students' developmental stage, setting them to work which they have a realistic chance to do well. Students do better when the activity fits how they think, for instance, offering alternative challenging and open-ended tasks.
2. Build up rich and stimulating resources, which can be used to both initiate and support creative development. These resources can be musical, visual or spatial, for example, a variety of recordings, slides, films, music software, instruments, body movements or dancing.
3. Be sensitive to the students' time needs during their collaborative processes and flexibly adapt the expectations as a unit of work progresses.
4. Be receptive of the readiness of students to accept feedback; to determine this, asking 'How can I help you best?' is a good start.
5. Build a positive emotional environment: students need to feel capable of taking risks and sense that their contributions are respected. This positive environment can be built and sustained through dialogue between students and teacher with constructive positive feedback, and with careful grouping of students – for example, pairing EAL students with buddies.
6. Include various levels of structure when promoting creativity, depending on the students, the task, and the desired learning. For example, teachers might set students a free choice about which problems to solve and how to do this. To increase efficiency, work needs to be preserved.
7. Facilitate the students' technical development by questioning, prompting, and modelling. Educators need to set up opportunities for models to be heard (e.g. older students, external musicians or themselves). They need to encourage further development of musical ideas, as novice musicians may be satisfied with their work after an initial exploratory phase.
8. Share the assessment of work and develop criteria with students to develop their self-assessment skills and facilitate the emergence of further ideas – for instance, students may be asked to come up with musical examples that match a particular aesthetic criteria (adapted from Odena, 2014b, p. 249).

These suggestions can be adapted for all types of music activities.



## Second case study: Music for Integration in Schools

(Odena et al., 2016)

### Context

This project, supported by the University of Glasgow's Chancellor's Fund, involved 29 music education student teachers investigating the use of music as a tool for integrating newly arrived children.

Student teachers observed classrooms while on placement in ten state-funded Primary schools in Glasgow, which had intakes of up to one third of EAL children. They observed music and other classes and had to reflect on the EAL pupils' interactions with the teacher and others in the class.

A major outcome was that music education appeared to be ideal for integrating newly arrived children because it transcends linguistic barriers. Reported preferred activities included co-operative musical games, warm ups and singing, group composition and performance.

The following quotations are selected from focus groups carried out on completion of the project.

'We had to take the different parts and put them all together... it was overwhelming seeing the whole school take part.'

### Musical activities: group composing

'First of all we split them into three groups or 'villages' and told them the task: we wanted them to come up with a national anthem for the giant of Thistle Mountain, trying to link back to all of the different things that we'd learned the previous week (nationalist music), and they would perform it to the other groups. [The activity] was led by the pupils. [They could] use the melody from the three songs that they'd sung in their assembly to integrate in. We also told them we want you to listen to other groups and try and think of what aspect of Thistle Mountain a certain instrument would represent, for example the drum kit representing the giant... The first song was 'Welcome all to Thistle Mountain' and the second 'Even Though We Never Met Him'. It was all about how they were prejudging the giant that they'd heard was up in the mountains. The final one was 'Make Everybody Feel Welcome', so at this point they'd all realised that even though he may be a giant and he's different, all of the aspects he had, somebody in their village had the same aspects.' (Student-teacher)

### Singing

Group singing was reported as an ideal medium to integrate all pupils as well as a memorable activity, particularly when carried out in large gatherings on a regular basis. 'It was the whole school, every child singing [at assembly] split it into three, first section, second section and back section.

We had to take the different parts and put them all together. The headmistress would say – if she saw someone not singing she would speak into the mic and be like 'Oh we've got such and such that isn't taking part, we've got such and such that's singing absolutely lovely from this group', not singing

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